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BOOK REVIEWS

A History of the American Nation. By ANDREW C. McLAUGHLIN.
Pages 587. D. Appleton & Co., 1899.

TEACHERS of history have looked forward to the appearance of this work with great interest, and their expectations will not be disappointed. It takes rank at once among the very best school histories. There are now five texts especially designed for use in high schools. Two of these, Johnston and Fiske, which were epoch making in their day, no longer meet present pedagogical demands. Another, McMaster, is handicapped by the omission of bibliographical aids. Only Channing remains therefore, with whom comparison would be profitable. The recent work of Channing is more philosophical, abounding in profound and searching analysis such as delights the true student, but makes heavy, perhaps too heavy, demands on the average teacher and the average pupil. McLaughlin is decidedly easier than Channing, though more difficult than any of the others. He confines himself, in the main, to political and constitutional affairs, which are described in a singularly flowing and readable style. Indeed, the reviewer found it a difficult book to write up for a somewhat unusual reason, viz., because he constantly became so interested as to forget for what purpose he was reading it. The general spirit of the work is admirable, and all the more to be commended from its contrast to the academic pessimism, which has been so fashionable of late. The conception of history is idealistic, resulting in constant emphasis on character as the decisive factor. There is no symptom of wavering or faint-heartedness regarding the future of democracy. A healthy optimism and robust confidence in the fundamental goodness of human nature appear on every page. No one who learns history from this book will ever be tempted to despair of the republic. Nor, after reading the pages on the French wars and the Revolution, will anyone readily fall a victim to the sickly sentimentality regarding war and peace which has emanated from the school of Cobden. These passages are almost as good an antidote for the peace-at-any-price virus as the first chapter of Burgess' Political Science. One misgiving, however, occurs to the reviewer in this connection. May not optimism be carried too far? There cer-

tainly are ugly facts in the world, and dangerous problems in industry, society and state, which must be grappled with. Is it well that pupils be turned out of school not even suspecting their existence? In the shock of the inevitable discovery is there not danger of moral shipwreck through the loss of ideals?

The maps call for special mention. Unlike most maps in school histories, they are the product of painstaking investigation and will bear minute examination. They are also fairly numerous, though more might have been included with advantage. The division of space by periods is also a notable feature, being altogether the best to be found in any school history. Before 1776, however, the cross division by colonies and by centuries produces on the reader the impression of diffuseness and repetition. If possible, the sections on the 17th and 18th centuries should be consolidated and the space considerably reduced.

The Teachers Manual contains many valuable suggestions to teachers, together with additional bibliographical references. In a second edition it is to be hoped that "suggestive questions" will be added, which contribute so much of value.

EDWARD VAN DYKE ROBINSON.

ROCK ISLAND, ILL.

The German Higher Schools. By JAMES E. RUSSELL, Ph.D.
Longmans, Green & Co.

THOSE readers of the SCHOOL REVIEW who followed the valuable articles on the German higher schools, published in the SCHOOL REVIEW in 1894, 1896, and 1897, are already aware of the thoroughness and scholarly insight with which Dr. Russell carried on his investigations in German secondary education. The book before us treats the whole subject of German higher schools in the same scholarly and admirable manner, making use of the material in the articles above referred to, but adding a great deal more. The book begins with a historical sketch of the beginnings of German schools, the origin and rise of the present school system, covering in all the period from 718 down to modern times. This is followed by a minute description of the actual workings of the secondary schools in Germany today, a chapter being given to the methods of instruction in each of the leading branches of study, while the rules, regulations and customs—examinations and privileges, student life, professional training of